

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2320

C 75 L 02

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding campaign contributions.

Sponsors: By Representatives McDermott, Schmidt, Romero, McMorris, Santos, Miloscia, Kessler, Haigh and Edwards; by request of Public Disclosure Commission.

House Committee on State Government
Senate Committee on State & Local Government

Background:

The Public Disclosure Act (PDA) was enacted following passage of Initiative 276 in 1972. Among the stated purposes of the legislation is an intent to make information on political campaign and lobbying contributions available to the public. With a few exceptions, the requirements of the initiative apply to all election campaigns. The Fair Campaign Practices Act was enacted as part of Initiative 134 in 1992. The latter initiative imposes campaign contribution limits on elections for state office. The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) is responsible for enforcing the laws relating to personal financial affairs reporting, lobbyist reporting, campaign finance reporting, campaign contribution limits, and independent expenditure reporting.

The treasurer of a political campaign or committee is required to file a report with the PDC and the appropriate county elections officer listing the names of contributors and amounts contributed. Those who contribute \$25 or less do not need to be named. The reports are filed every Friday beginning on the first day of the month four months preceding the special or general election and ending on the day of the election.

The campaign finance reporting requirements enacted by the 1972 initiative apply to all elections, state and local. However, the campaign contribution limits enacted in the 1992 initiative and codified in RCW 42.17.640 apply only to elections for state office. Included in the 1992 initiative were definitions for "general election" and "primary election" that refer to the election or nomination of a person for state office. These definitions were intended to apply only to those sections of law enacted by that initiative, which only applied to campaign contribution limits on elections for state office. However, as codified in Chapter 42.17 RCW, the definitions could be interpreted to apply to the entire PDA, including those sections that apply to local elections.

Summary:

The due date for weekly reports of political contributions is moved from Friday to Monday.

The definitions of "general election" and "primary election" are restricted to refer only to the section of law (RCW 43.17.640) that imposes campaign contribution limits on elections for state office.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 97 0

Senate 47 0

Effective: June 13, 2002